

**Smoking Cessation Media:
*Perceptions of Louisiana Residents***

A Qualitative Research Study

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Executive summary.

Study purpose.

The objectives of this study were to:

- 1) identify media strategies to assist qualified Louisiana smokers to call a centralized helpline, and
- 2) in the process of doing so, evaluate the tone, technique, and content of smoking cessation commercials for their effectiveness in increasing qualified callers (i.e., those smokers who are ready to enlist assistance in and take steps towards smoking cessation); the helpline will offer callers detailed information regarding smoking cessation and resources to begin the process.

Methods

In order to meet these objectives, 6 focus groups with current and former smokers were conducted throughout Louisiana. Focus groups were audiotaped, transcribed, and their content systematically analyzed using qualitative methods.

Findings

A total of subjects completed the anonymous demographic form. Of these, the majority of subjects was male (33.3%), white (69.4%), married (50.0%), and employed (77.8%). About a third (33.3%) self-reported being an active current smoker; the remainder were former smokers or individuals in the process of quitting.

Key concepts

- Humorous commercials generated the most conversation, and appeared to be the most memorable to participants. However, many articulated that there is not a place for humor when dealing with such a serious issue as health effects of smoking. Serious, dramatic commercials were seen overall as the best way of communicating the dangers of smoking and the benefits of smoking cessation.
- Short, concise, easy-to-follow commercials were seen as the best method of communicating the issues to viewers. Commercials with abstract messages or those that require careful watching and listening are unlikely to successfully recruit calls to the helpline.
- Participants were not enthusiastic about the use of helplines. The brief commercial [No more butts] displaying a helpline number with the text that

“Over two thousand Americans quit smoking every day” was met with concerns about calling. Several participants were concerned that calling the number (due to caller ID and other mechanisms) would result in being harassed, having telemarketers call them, or having violations of privacy.

- Commercials which demonstrate that quitting smoking is a process, and that one may stumble before completing the process, were appreciated by the participants, provided they emphasize the positive (success is possible) and not only the negative (difficult to quit).
- The one commercial featuring a working class male was welcomed by the participants and viewed as being the most “real.”
- Characters that are working class, from different socioeconomic levels and races—who are “real people”—were most engaging to participants. Slickness, while often humorous, was more difficult for participants to relate to.
- The concepts of death and loss were well received as methods of bringing the seriousness of smoking home. Many participants had experienced such a loss, and most appeared to readily extrapolate that loss to the loss their loved ones would feel in the event of their deaths.
- Commercials which present the effects of smoking on a community—especially with regard to loss of resources which could otherwise be used in the community—were seen as very effective. However, this type of commercial must use a variety of races, and not select just one. The commercial using only an African-American community was appreciated for its content—that smoking takes away from the community—but all races felt that it suggested that only one race smoked. This was offensive to everyone in a variety of ways. Thus, a commercial which focused on socioeconomic class or actual community—and included a mix of races—with the same content would be an excellent approach.

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Protection of human subjects.

All elements of this study and its conduct were approved prior to implementation by the approved by the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Institutional Review Board (IRB). All subjects were asked to sign the IRB-approved informed consent form prior to participating.

Staff training.

Prior to study implementation, all staff members participated in a three-day intensive training workshop. Each staff member received training materials which included excerpts from graduate texts on qualitative research, articles, and guidelines on focus group conduct. The training session included basic information about ETS and smoking, including adverse health risks of each and public health implications, a thorough discussion of the study questions and objectives, skills building for moderator, notetaker, and other study staff, and a discussion of the job requirements of the study on the staff. In addition, Drs. Edward and Patricia Morse—behaviorists who have conducted a large body of research on high risk behaviors (including smoking) and experts in qualitative research methods—conducted several focus group role playing exercises. Staff members took turns acting as moderator, notetaker, and participants in order to

gain experience in focus group methodology. In addition, Drs. Morse and Morse assisted the staff to articulate their own biases regarding smoking and ETS, which allowed them to confront their own ability to conduct focus groups in an unbiased fashion. This was paired with a discussion on the importance of reducing bias and methods to ensure that the staff's views did not contaminate the group. Prior to focus group implementation, staff members role played with the actual focus group guide (Appendix A).

Instrument development.

Development of the focus group instrument (Appendix A) took place over a six-week period. Staff members independently listed multiple questions to comprehensively address the research objectives. Each staff member's questions were submitted to the coordinator for review and all questions were compiled. Staff then met to discuss each question, its merits and flaws, and questions were selected. Each staff member then reviewed and revised the guide, brought it back to the group, which revised it again. After several iterations, the guides were developed; they were revised once more following the first ETS and smoking cessation focus groups and, for ETS, after the first eight focus groups were conducted, in order to improve the depth of information obtained on several needed themes.

A brief, anonymous, quantitative survey was developed in a similar fashion. (See Appendix B for instrument.) The goal of this survey was to gather data on demographic and smoking behavior data of the subject participants.

Focus group implementation.

All focus groups were conducted in a similar manner. The coordinator identified sites for the groups and recruitment assistance from contacts held by the contractor (Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine) and the Louisiana Office of Public Health. Once site locations were established, the coordinator worked in concert with the site staff to recruit participants. Flyers [approved by the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Committee on Use of Human Subjects (IRB)] were distributed at the sites and participants identified as being interested were given reminder cards. Recruitment was conducted at the discretion of the site staff and study staff, and was non-random. Only current or former smokers were included in the smoking cessation groups (although several non-smokers were inadvertently included in one of the groups).

To provide input (to the degree possible) of Louisiana residents from both rural and urban areas, multiple locations were selected. Study staff traveled to focus group locations to conduct the studies. Due to their range of racial and socioeconomic indicators, the following locations in Louisiana were selected:

New Orleans, Lafayette, Monroe, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, and Slidell (Appendix C).

As the focus groups got started, study staff served food and allowed the group to get comfortable with each other and with them. Each room was set up with two tape recorders, to ensure that at least one tape would function. During the focus groups, one person acted as the moderator and one as the notetaker. Moderators were responsible for providing ground rules (Appendix B) leading the discussion, following the focus group instrument as a guide. Notetakers took notes regarding non-verbal communication of participants, perceptions, extra observations, and key phrases. The notetaker was also allowed to ask questions of the participants, under the moderator's guidance. Each focus group lasted between one and one and one-half hours. At the completion of each session, participants were asked if they had questions or comments. They were then given fact sheets (if they desired them) regarding smoking cessation and ETS) and other literature. Finally, each participant was given a \$10.00 giftcard to Walmart, Winn Dixie, or Walgreens, depending on the location of the group. Site recruiters were also given a \$10.00 giftcard or another incentive for participation (e.g., basket of cookies).

Following completion of the focus groups, the notetakers transcribed the tapes as soon as possible. These transcripts were then analyzed, as described in the analysis section below.

Several steps were taken to select the 12 videos pre-tested in the smoking cessation focus groups. Based upon availability, relevance to study population, and quality of commercial, approximately 200 commercials were selected from the Media Campaign Resource Center online Catalog (available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/mcrc/resource.htm>). These were pre-screened by a sub-committee which included the Louisiana Office of Public Health liaison (Elisabeth Gleckler) and the study coordinator, among others. The 35 were then screened by the whole study staff, and 12 were selected following a critical analysis of each using the video analysis content tool (Appendix D). When consensus was achieved, 12 commercials were selected (Appendix E).

Rather than striving to compare only technical aspects of specific videos—for example, to assess whether participants preferred a blue background or a red background—the goal in selecting the commercials was to gain a greater understanding of *both* the technical and contextual elements that would assist qualified callers to call the helpline. With this in mind, the commercials were selected and paired in sets of two to contrast/highlight key elements in order to elicit information about the commercials. Each group saw four commercials (two sets of two). The pairings were alternated (within the same sets of four) to observe differences in responses to different pairings and orders. Through this method it was hoped that information would emerge which would allow

application of the results to construction or selection of commercials in a broad case, rather than just the selection of a specific commercial. (Please note, too, that many of the commercials have restricted or time-limited availability, thus selection of a specific commercial would not have been useful. Further, the commercial(s) selected will have to be customized to meet the State's needs.)

Analysis.

Univariate analysis of the quantitative survey was conducted to describe the demographic and behavioral characteristics of the participants. To evaluate the transcripts, a multi-step process was used. The text formatting was cleaned and organized to provide consistency in format. All texts were left verbatim. The transcripts were then carefully read in their entirety multiple times. Every statement was then coded for overall concept. The transcripts were then further coded with a second layer of coding, breaking down each concept into subcategories. (Secondary concepts included those such as "targeted audience," "perceptions of humor," etc..) A third coding process then elucidated the specific types of response categories within the subcategories and categories. This information was both coded directly into the text (and then sorted) as well as yielding the conceptual framework. After each iteration, the person conducting the analysis (MM) discussed it at length with several staff members (GB, CE, LM, and DM) to ensure that the framework corresponded to their perceptions during the focus groups. Once sorted, select phrases were extracted to highlight the themes which correspond to the research questions and other relevant topics.

Each focus group was shown four commercials in two sets of two. The pairings were made on the basis of concept, with the intent that this would assist participants to focus on the content and not only technical aspects of the commercials. (For example, avoiding comparisons of color backgrounds and instead focusing on message and rationale of the commercial.) The pairings were alternated (within the same sets of four) to observe differences in responses to different pairings and orders. Given that the availability of commercials changes rapidly, this approach intended to provide a deeper understanding of the concepts that would aid qualified callers to call a Louisiana helpline, and assess commercials available at the completion of the study.

This approach was ultimately successful. What follows are excerpts of key information about why participants tried to quit, approaches to quitting, responses to specific commercials, excerpts which address the overall approaches of commercials and preferences based on contrasts, and then commercials suggested by participants. Before each section of comments regarding specific commercials, a brief description of the commercial will be provided; the complete content analysis is provided in Appendix E. (Note please that these are not the official CDC transcripts of the commercials but rather video content analysis

performed by staff member MM.) The commercials are grouped according to their overall themes.

Results

Almost three quarters (73.9%; n=36) of the focus group subjects completed the anonymous demographic form (Appendix B). Of these, the majority of subjects was female (63.9%), white (69.4%), married (50.0%), and employed (77.8%). About a third (33.3%) self-reported being a current smoker.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics and smoking behaviors of participants (n=36)*

	n	%
Gender		
Male	12	33.3
Female	23	63.7
Current marital status		
Single	8	22.2
Married	18	50.0
Divorced/separated	6	16.7
Widowed	1	2.8
Unmarried but living with partner	3	8.3
Race		
White/Caucasian	25	69.4
Black/African-American	9	25.0
Other	2	5.6
Residential status		
Own home	19	52.8
Rent home	7	19.4
Rent apartment	5	13.9
Other	4	13.9
Number of people living with participant		
Lives alone	4	11.1
Lives with others	32	88.9
Lives with children (<18 years)		
Yes	21	58.3
No	15	41.7
Employed		
Yes	28	77.8
No	8	22.2
Highest grade completed in school		
Less than high school	7	19.4
Graduate school degree	29	80.6

Table 1—continued

	n	%	
Current smoker			
Yes	12	33.3	Several subjects declined to respond to the following questions; percentages provided above are based upon those giving a response. *Not all participants completed the survey. **In the case of
If yes, number stating they ever tried to quit	34	94.4	
If yes, mean (sd) years smoked		23.9 (13.4)	
No	24	66.7	
Live with a smoker**			
Yes	7	19.4	
No	29	80.6	
Employed in the health care field			
Yes	14	38.9	
No	22	61.1	

smokers, live with smoker other than self.

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Summary of commercial content (<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MCRC>).

To facilitate reading of report, please detach this section and use for easy reference.

For full content of commercials, see Appendix E

Soul (also called "Heart")

Tone: Dramatic, emphasizing effects on individual and society

Summary: Animated heart pumping with voiceover discussing number of deaths a year and results of smoking, ends with feeling pain in the "soul."

Never let it be said

Tone: Dramatic, emphasizing effects on community

Summary: African-American neighborhood, demonstrating (visual and with voiceover) how cigarette smoking is taking resources out of neighborhood and putting it into hands of tobacco executives; resources which could have been used productively.

Birthday

Tone: Dramatic

Summary: Elderly man talking near toddler grandson. Stopped for him; child as reason to quit.

Anniversary (Georgia)

Tone: Dramatic

Summary: Woman talking; husband died of tobacco-related illness; family sad and decided to tell him that he and his wife were celebrating their 50th anniversary, even though he only made it to their 49th.

Song (little brown eyes) (also called "Song CA")

Tone: Dramatic

Summary: Young African-American woman tells story of father who died of lung cancer, and used to sing her songs.

Chain (generations)

Tone: Dramatic

Summary: Multiple generations of African-American women shown; they all say their smoking will not influence future generations—"do as I say, not as I do"—yet subsequent generations continue to smoke, all the way down to small girl.

Date

Tone: Humorous

Summary: Woman on date sneaks into bathroom to smoke, with humorous and catastrophic results. Voiceover states, "there's a moment in every smoker's life when it becomes clear it's finally time to quit. If it hasn't happened for you yet, it will."

Gala event (impotence)

Tone: Humorous

Summary: Sexy female attracts cadre of handsome men who are smoking; voiceover discusses smoking as a cause of impotence; cigarettes as humorous visual aid depicting impotence.

Line (Chuck)

Tone: Humorous, informational

Summary: Blue collar man trying to quit demonstrates visually that you can have lapses and fall back into smoking, but that it doesn't mean you have failed. Give it time and effort and you will be able to stop smoking.

Poisons

Tone: Humorous, informational

Summary: Family holding, sipping, and smelling scientific glasswear and paraphernalia, with voiceover about toxic chemicals being ingested or exposed to your family.

Hooked

Tone: Humorous, informational

Summary: Man fishing pulling in dying fish from pier; woman's voiceover saying that tobacco industry knows that nicotine is addictive and will continue to addict people.

Pick up the phone (no more butts) Locally made in Louisiana, January 2001

Tone: Informational

Summary: Phone with voiceover encouraging call to helpline; number printed on screen.



Results [continued]

Before screening the commercials, participants were asked to describe, briefly, their smoking history, and their relationship to and experience with quitting. The rationale behind this component of the focus group guide was to a) engage subjects and develop rapport with the moderator as well as other participants, and b) to ascertain the types of smokers in the focus groups (e.g., serious quitters who would be qualified callers, people who had already stopped smoking, etc.). Participants were very willing to discuss their smoking histories; in fact, it was at times difficult to steer the groups to screen and discuss the commercials due to their eagerness to discuss their personal experiences.

Reasons to stop smoking

Participants in the smoking cessation focus groups were primarily past-smokers or those currently attempting to quit. They wanted to quit for a variety of reasons.

Many cited health as the primary reason for wanting to quit:

“Besides the obvious, as smokers we are pretty well versed in the health effects. Even though I didn’t experience any yet I didn’t want to end up with oxygen or with emphysema.”

“My doctor told me I had chronic bronchitis. But I didn’t believe him, but then I noticed I was coughing an awful lot, and I didn’t like that.”

“Well I am afraid to have health problems. And there is heart disease on both sides of my family and my mom dies of a heart attack.”

“But what really helped me was the health aspects.”

“The health issues. In this building, in the winter, you get sick a lot. It’s like allergies or something, and those are getting worse. The permanent cough, the permanent frog in your throat. I didn’t want to cough all the time.”

Others wanted to quit for the sake of their families:

“My grandchildren, to see them grow up. I could see with my health situation for the next few years, my health wouldn’t be there to be an effect for my grandchildren. I knew to make lifestyle changes. I had been gradually slowing down anyhow. Down to half a pack per day for the last couple of years. Went from 2 packs to one pack, to half a pack per day.”

“I really think people need to see the reality of what smoking does to you. The real...I mean they should us some videos one time...just like a half an

hour deal and we watched videos. Of course we saw the yucky lungs and all that stuff and then they showed the aging process that does to your skin and they had some young, young girls like seventeen eighteen. And they were all new smokers and they digitally aged them and they were like 'oh gross.' That did go over well that is exactly what it does to you. The oxygen, emphysema, the laryngeal cancer, lung cancer, that is nasty business. Not good to walk over in the hospital. I think that is what smokers really need to see as a smoker or ex –smoker. Recovered smoker. That has the most effect on me. Life is too short anyway without spending it all sick like that.”

“I have to honestly admit that I won’t smoke in front of my dad because I am embarrassed and I know he doesn’t agree. Certain people that I respect and know their opinions. If I really thought it was okay, I wouldn’t care what these people thought. Where I hide...right there it tells me that I shouldn’t be doing it.”

Changing societal mores influenced some:

“It is not socially acceptable anymore. In restaurants you get to sit in the back by the dumpster. It’s not cool anymore. It used to be.”

And the expense was also an influencing factor:

“That was one of the things. And then price. It had gotten expensive. My rebel side said when they bump them up to twenty-seven bucks a carton I’m never gonna quit just because they raised the prices. But it is definitely a factor.”

“Health and expense. I’m in the minority now too, back when I started everyone was smoking and it was cool. Now its not cool.”

One cited a professional change as the impetus to stop:

“I decided to quit before I started a new job.”

Several participants indicated that the addictive quality of cigarettes was one of the largest barriers to quitting; this quality made smoking a stress-reliever. They just did not want to quit, even though these particular individuals were attempting to or had quit already:

“It’s the perfect drug. You’re down and out, the world’s now great. It’s the perfect drug.”

“The perfect crutch.”

"I enjoyed smoking cigarettes because it took the edge off any stress I had. Because of the job I had... extremely difficult. And the cigarettes would smooth that over. It became a lifestyle change."

Others simply enjoyed smoking:

"I don't know, you think it's relaxing. Maybe it is just the opposite. You know you have a glass of wine and a cigarette. Man, that's really good."

"I just enjoyed smoking. I would like to do it. I didn't really want to quit."

"We all felt it wasn't that difficult, what we're having trouble with now, or at least for me, staying smoke free."

"I still could [smoke] very easily. I could light one up right now."

Previous cessation history

Most of the participants had tried to quit at least one time before, using a multitude of approaches:

"Exercising. My doctor tells me that. Exercise is very important."

"I quit for eight months one time and I was sick and tired of them, they [cigarettes] are disgusting. And then I started back after eight months. I have tried group hypnosis, I have tried Xyban, I have tried the patch and I just can't seem to quit again."

"The first time I quit I used the Nicorette gum. I went to class and I used the gum. This time when I quit, I used the Nicoderm CQ patch."

"The first time I quit I used the Nicorette gum. I went to class and I used the gum. This time when I quit, I used the Nicoderm CQ patch."

"[I] used the Nicorette at one time. It worked for about a day."

"Chewing gum, the patches. The patches don't work."

"They only thing I've found that really works is cold turkey and tough it out, and chewing carrots and gum and keep yourself very busy, especially your hands."

"I took Xyban and Albuterol. The pills you take. And I took Xyban twice and the Albuterol once and they didn't make me quit at all."

Several participants raised the issue of the price of smoking cessation aids:

“Besides that stop smoking medicine costs more than the cigarettes so it is cheaper to smoke than it is smoke.”

“I don’t know why if they want people to quit they don’t lower the price of the stop smoking stuff because more people would quit. Because more people would...”

“They [smoking cessation aids] are so expensive.

“The Nicorette patches are like \$30 bucks a thing.”

“I used gum for about 2 days. I carry a pack with me, which I never use. That was it.”

Some participants who already had stopped smoking, found that family, co-workers, and support groups were instrumental as they attempted to stop smoking:

“You know what keeps me on the side of that thin line. The ridicule that I would face from my family, friends, and co-workers.”

“I get the urge every once and awhile. Its less and less frequent. I think the class really helped out. I was surprised. The class helped tremendously... Finding other things to do with your time. To get away from those habits.

“Talk on the phone a lot...to friends.”

“I called the Nicoderm patch number. And they talk to you.”

“What helped me was a lot of support and from people who had never smoked before. I wanted to be healthy like that. I didn’t want to be a smoker anymore. And to identify yourself as that for so long...you know I have quit other things in my life. And it just has to do with changing your identity. So it is a good thing to be around people that support that change in you. And people that are just like you. I don’t go to any support groups for smoking but if I did I wouldn’t go to one that was all black males. I want to go to one that is all middle-aged women like myself.”

“It is always better to do something with someone or a group than alone. Most people don’t like to be alone.”

“I found that a group helps. I guess it is kind of like AA [Alcoholic’s Anonymous] meetings. I don’t know because I am not an alcoholic but they tell me how AA meetings work for most people. And I would think

that this falls in about the same category. Because you have got to want to quit drinking just like anyone else.”

“One thing he has told me because I had stayed seven days and then I slipped. I told him, I am going to be honest with you I slipped. But I said in the program they say don’t stop trying, keep on at it. And he said, that is right you keep on at it. He says you keep working at it. So I am going to keep working at it. Today I didn’t slip up as of that.”

“I think my husband told me he was proud of me. That kind of affected me a lot.”

Commercials

For each of the following commercials, participant perception of the target audience as well as salient comments are given. Full descriptions of the videos are listed in Appendix B.

Soul

Brief description: Animated heart pumping with voiceover discussing number of deaths a year and results of smoking, ends with feeling pain in the “soul.”

The content of Soul as well as its implementation were neither well-received nor well understood by participants.

The intent and the target audience of Soul were viewed as:

“...a general one [message]... for everyone.”

Many did not understand the commercial at all:

“I don’t understand the one talking about the soul. With the rope tied around. I didn’t understand that one. Where did that come from?”

“I didn’t get it. Where did the soul tie in?”

Though others did:

“It hurts your soul.”

“It was your heart. You see the heart.”

“The first one [Soul] was more like religious. Maybe they went through the religious aspect of it.”

Some felt it derided smokers as anti-religious:

"They are talking about your Soul. Your Soul is not your heart your Soul. Most people that smoke, a lot of the smokers that I know they are very religious people. Okay they smoke. I am not saying that it's perfect. I am just telling you both ads...the other ad was more prejudice. A lot of white people smoke. A lot of Asian people smoke...they didn't say nothing about that. And it would cause an argument and if anyone who saw it they would just look at it and say that is B.S. and flip the channel. It wouldn't capture anyone's attention."

One person was angered and felt strongly—with substantial agreement—that the commercial would not be effective at all:

"They would definitely say that [Soul] is a bunch of B.S. The second ad [Never let it be said] would more like them stop and think than the first one [Soul]. They wouldn't care."

"Around any child or teenager or anyone else we would see on the street. If they was that ad, they would be going, 'like that is a bunch of B.S.'"

Never let it be said

Brief description: African-American neighborhood, demonstrating (visual and with voiceover) how cigarette smoking is taking resources out of neighborhood and putting it into hands of tobacco executives; resources which could have been used productively.

This commercial generated the most—and the most heated—discussions at all focus groups. The commercial was liked by everyone for its message:

"It takes all your income and your money. More people like us that smoke we are in a low-income bracket. If you smoke that is taking food away from your family. If you go get a carton of cigarettes and pay \$30.00 with that is \$30.00 you could have bought a weeks' worth of groceries."

"[Never let it be said] hits home it really hits home it hits home with everyone. Everyone can understand it financially."

"I like the last [Never] ad because it had some research in it. It developed into a story about what might have been.... dreams, hopes."

"We have three people that smoke in my family and we spent between \$100.00 - \$200.00 every month on cigarettes."

“It basically said the truth.”

“The second one is showing that they always target and the minorities... It is like gambling, that is just a tax on the poor. People come in and gamble day in and day out and it is just a way of collecting tax money. The placement of ads...I know they are not allowed to but it is like Joe Camel, he is so cool. It is just attracting...they want to make their money so they are being clever with their advertising. It's not fair.”

The commercial was viewed as targeting:

“Black people.”

“They are targeting black people cause that is all they show.”

However, participants of all races who voiced their opinions disliked for its racial emphasis. That the commercial was only in the African-American community and only showed African-Americans smoking wrangled people of both races. The upset stemmed from a fear by all races that only African-Americans were being viewed as smokers, and that only African-Americans are affected financially and otherwise by smoking.

A common perception was that the commercial was saying that more African-Americans smoke than other racial groups:

“And it is not true. I go to school and there are more white people that smoke than there are black people in school.”

“Why do they think all black people smoke?”

“Less black people smoke than white people.”

“The man came into this store and he shook hands and he was putting them into the black community as if we [African-Americans] are the only ones that smoke. And that is bull.”

“We all smoke.”

In addition, participants felt that it was prejudiced:

“Family and homelessness. Because there is homelessness among most all races.”

“[Never let it be said] looked kind of prejudice to me. “

“They are getting all my money too and I am not black. “

“You stop and walk down the street and you look at the older black people, very few smoke. Very few. Most of the ones that smoke now are the teenagers coming up now. The kids. Well they cannot say it came from the black people, it’s not.”

The commercial caused debate and some reported that they felt it would do the same at home:

“Actually that would cause arguments. Most people that would come to my house would say it is B.S.”

The message was right, but the method wrong:

“You spend so much on cigarettes. It is basically true what they are saying they just went about it the wrong way. They are targeting one group.”

Many had suggestions regarding how to take the commercial and revise it to work more effectively:

“That second one that had all the black people if you had it more integrated that would be something I could relate to. I wouldn’t be smoking if my son didn’t buy my cigarettes.”

“Mix [racially] the second ad. (Lots of agreement.)”

“More white people in the second ad instead of all black people.”

“The race situation needs to be changed but finances is everybody’s problem.”

Birthday

Brief description: Elderly man talking near grandson. Stopped for him; child as reason to quit.

Although this commercial was viewed as targeting:

“Grandparents, older people.”

Almost everyone liked, related to, and thought that this commercial would be effective in getting people to stop smoking. Part of its appeal stemmed perhaps from the fact that it could be viewed inter-generationally:

“You don’t have to look at it as a grandparent to a grandchild. You can look at it as a momma to a daddy. Momma to a baby.”

"Because it is something everybody can relate to. Even the younger generation because teenagers now have children." [When asked who would relate to Birthday and why.]

The message was clear to all:

"He [Grandpa] quit smoking because he wanted to grow old and enjoy his grandchildren. He was serious from target go and he caught your attention.

When contrasted with Never let it be said, this one seemed to give a people a reason to stop smoking:

"The last one [Never let it be said] was focused around one thing: education. Which is good but it isn't really gonna give people a reason to stop smoking."

And it (like Song) was emotionally engaging:

"The two ads where the two, a granddad and a dad was killed, could go a long way for someone who is willing to quit smoking, because it moves someone emotionally."

"I like the first ad. It does target older people and it's truthful. A lot of grandparents want to see their grandbabies grow up. My dad tried. He had his first grandson that he actually gets to see and he tried to quit but it didn't work. We went and bought him cigarettes."

When asked which would make them stop smoking, some responded:

"The one about the little baby and the grandparents."

Anniversary (Georgia)

Brief description: Woman talking; husband died of tobacco-related illness; family sad and decided to tell him that he and his wife were celebrating their 50th anniversary, even though he only made it to their 49th.

Though in some ways parallel—in visual images of older person, tone, seriousness—to Birthday, Anniversary elicited mixed responses. This commercial was felt to target:

"Family."

"I think the multi-generations [are] there. Aimed for the whole family. She's trying to show people what can happen when you continue to smoke."

The commercial's message and story line came through clearly:

"The point I got is that it takes your life from you. You are not going to get where you want to get by smoking. Because obviously he wanted to reach his fiftieth wedding anniversary and he didn't. Or they knew he wasn't because he smoked so. It just shows that you are not going to reach all of your goals if you are harming yourself with cigarettes."

And resonated with the personal experiences of several participants:

"And then as far as the second one [Anniversary], with the lady's husband passing from it, it reminds me I lost and aunt and a grandmother to cancer, because they smoked pretty much all their lives. I watched these two ladies lay there and their bodies just rot away from cancer..."

The level of emotion attracted some, while repelling others:

"Those kind of emotional bang from commercials just turn me off. I'd want to turn it off. Because I would keep thinking, no that won't happen to me, I don't want to look at it. And I'd get rid of it. It would affect me in a different way."

"It affects me the opposite of you. I like that [the emotional bang]."

There were several criticisms of the story line and production:

"I wish there were more pictures of grandpa on oxygen in the hospital bed instead of all that happy stuff."

"They needed to go more into detail with the second one because it was brief, to me. They showed the man being on oxygen and saying it was caused my smoking and that he thought it was his fiftieth wedding anniversary when it was actually his forty-ninth. They didn't show enough of details... To me they just breezed through it. They just showed brief clips not really getting into it."

One person felt that the commercial would not help a person to stop smoking:

"You walk out of the room and light up even though he has an oxygen tank on. It doesn't stop you, you have to want it."

Song (little brown eyes)

Brief description: Young African-American woman tells story of father who died of lung cancer, and used to sing her songs.

Like other commercials in this category, the emotional tenor of Song and its handling of life and death matters was favorably looked upon:

The target was viewed as:

“Black males.”

It made an impact especially on people who had lost relatives and friends to cancer:

“My daddy died from cancer.”

This commercial struck most of the participants as poignant:

“[Song] makes a bigger impact because it makes you think of the loved ones you have lost through smoking. And they are not there around to see their child or whatever.”

“[Song] ... hit me stronger because what if that’s my daughter and I’m dead?”

“The second one [Song] was really, really serious.

“I think the second one [Song] makes a bigger impact though. It really makes you think.”

Chain (generations)

Brief description: Multiple generations of African-American women shown; they all say their smoking will not influence future generations—“do as I say, not as I do”—yet subsequent generations continue to smoke, all the way down to small girl.

Like Song, Chain was well-received; however, it was not extensively discussed. It was viewed as:

“Targeting more heavily the older generation to stop, to quit. So the younger generation won’t know about it.”

When contrasted with Hooked, this was better understood and considered easier to understand on the go:

“What I’m saying is... What if I was passing...the way the visual of it is and say I didn’t hear it. I wouldn’t pay any attention. I would just think it’s a man fishing. But that 1st one [Chain] you could pass and not hear the words, just see the child mocking the momma you’d know they’re talking about cigarettes. You would stop just to see what they were saying. But the 2nd one [Hooked] you wouldn’t. I wouldn’t at least. Unless I was sitting there listening to what they were saying. You may sit there and listen. But if you didn’t hear it you’d just think the man was sitting there fishing. And if they put it on a poster they better put it in big writing so people can really read it and see the words.”

The point was generally well-accepted and the message comprehended:

“The young generation. It’s letting the old generation know what the young generation thinks. Cause just like it said “do as I say, not as you see”, but they are going to do as they see. So its telling them that you’re generation is going to follow you, they’re going to follow you into your footsteps. And it depends on... how I would take that advertisement. I’m doing this, I don’t want my child seeing me do this. I don’t want him to do this, so I better stop doing this.”

Date

Brief description: woman on date sneaks into bathroom to smoke, with humorous and catastrophic results.

The target audience of Date was viewed as:

“Middle-aged women who are trying to land a husband.”

For some, the message was clear:

“The reason was you know you have to quit when.... You gotta start sneaking around to smoke because everyone you know doesn’t smoke. It is embarrassing if you gotta sneak off to the bathroom to do it in the first place.”

Though some were uncertain about the real message of the commercial, and some even missed it entirely:

“I kind of respect the girl for not smoking in front of him but was she trying to hide the fact that she smoked? Or was she nice enough to say I am in a restaurant, I don’t want to smoke in front of everybody else. What was her

purpose? Was she nervous because she does like the guy? I think the thing I got out of it is to be truthful to someone. If you do smoke, let that person know because people should like for what you are and not what you do.”

The issue of social acceptability of smoking came clear, however:

“I like the one with the girl because it is getting the word out that smoking is becoming less acceptable. And if you are going to go and smoke you are going to have to do it in private because no one wants to see you do it.”

“It is more of a drug thing now you gotta go and hide and do it. Instead of doing it in front of people.”

“There is the whole foolishness aspect of it too. It’s letting you know that nobody else likes a smoker. That is what that is saying. It is saying you are not acceptable. You are going to go off and hide and smoke. And this is what is going to happen to you when you do it. So it is more like an embarrassment issue.”

Though it circulated around the experience of a woman, its message was readily applied to men as well:

“But he would walk outside and it’s the same principle. He would...say he would say excuse me and walk outside and a car would go past and he would get totally soaked. It is saying the same thing...”

When asked whether the commercial would enable participants to call the helpline, the response was unanimously:

“No, it makes you laugh. It’s cute. It is just like the Pepsi ad at the NFL game. It was cute, it made everyone laugh but it didn’t make you buy Pepsi.”

“Funny. It wouldn’t make you want to stop smoking but it was funny. It would make you laugh.”

Gala event (impotence)

Brief description: Sexy female attracts cadre of handsome men who are smoking; voiceover discusses smoking as a cause of impotence; cigarettes as humorous visual aid depicting impotence.

This commercial was the most extensively and hotly discussed. Despite the fact that some participants did not like the humor it (see below) it is clear that the topic may be highly effective in initiating a qualified call to a helpline because of its humorous sexual innuendo. Although many disagreed with its particular use of humor as a means to address something as serious as smoking, it did strike a chord with both males and females as well:

“I loved [Gala event]” was a common sentiment.

When asked who the commercial targets, participants seem to feel that it targeted males to help them stop smoking but equally affected females:

“For men. I will never look at a man smoking the same way.”

Many did not realize that impotence has been identified as a risk of smoking:

“I think maybe show the first one to men, because they don’t realize it.”

“I think [this] one hits a message that you don’t hear a lot about, impotence. So that’s another message as to why you shouldn’t smoke.”

The sexy, cool quality of the commercial seemed to be the appealing facets of the commercial, debunking—though its own slickness—the notion of smoking as cool:

“James Bond...you’re so sexy if you light up...Marlboro ads seem sexy. And this tells you, no, it’s going to cause some dysfunction, actually, especially in older men.”

“It took the glamour out of smoking. I like the first one [Gala event]. Because that’s why we all start smoking, it was cool. When I started smoking I was 14 or 15 yrs old. I was cool. Everybody smoked and it was cool.”

Others felt the humor and slickness were inappropriate and may have hindered the message:

“The first one [Gala event] is too pretty and too funny. There ain’t nothing pretty or funny about smoking.”

“Do you believe that information? I thought it was humorous. I didn’t even put that together. Right, right. That went over my head. It seems that any man would think about... Until you said that [that impotence was health risk of smoking] I was lost.”

And when contrasted with Song, even some of those who were favorable about Gala event indicated that Song would help them initiate a call more than it would: "It's Song more dangerous than the first one [Gala event]. You're talking about death there."

When asked whether the humorous [Gala event] or serious one [Song] would make them call first, the consensus in several groups was:

"The second one (Song)."

Another point was raised, however, regarding the need for humor and how Gala event could be beneficial for several reasons:

"We have a lot of reality ads right now dealing with like AIDS and different things, really cold hard reality things. Well that one [Gala event] kinda makes a comedy out of it, but it's dealing with impotence. I think that might be something that would appeal, now you say adult men, but it may appeal down to men in their twenties, they may start to worry about that happening to them... I thought that men always used cigarettes to get a better feel of confidence to try to attract women, but it could also prove to be a disaster when they try to show that they have a pretty good style of smoking, and it puts them down and they lose what they're going to get."

Line (Chuck)

Brief description: Blue collar man trying to quit demonstrates visually that you can have lapses and fall back into smoking, but that it doesn't mean you have failed. Give it time and effort and you will be able to stop smoking.

Line was the only one of the commercials screened that focused on a working class white male as the protagonist. This was readily identified by the participants when asked who this commercial targeted:

"Regular smokers and everyday smokers."

"The blipping one I just thought he was more like the common guy. Just a regular guy."

"Down to earth and real."

"He had a worker's uniform shirt like common people."

But several felt that it would be equally appealing to women:

"I didn't see it as sexist. I just saw it as the point. I didn't think it was a male thing."

In contrast to Date, it looked real,

“Whereas the first one, the glamorous one [Date], that made it look pretty.”

Many understood the content and many liked the message:

“I can relate. I’d like to know how many blips I have. A lot of them.”

”I like the first one. I thought it was...he is showing you that it is hard to quit smoking and you can mess up and fall back but yet you can still come around. And he was proud of himself.”

”The blipping one I just thought he was more like the common guy. Just a regular guy.”

“The first one [Line] was catchy; it really caught your attention.”

“I like the first one [Line]. The first one was reality.”

Others reacted quite negatively to this commercial, liking the messenger but not the message:

“I don’t think that was a convincing ad.”

“I thought [Line] communicated in a very negative sense that for someone who is willing to quit smoking and has to look at this ad, it could be impossible or next to impossible. So, I was not impressed with this ad because it has a negative...if there was an ad which says that to quit smoking, there should be more determination...psychologically strong. There are so many emotional things attached with smoking, then you better quit it, then you may have to get separated from your beloved ones.”

“It [Line] might be a little abstract for some people. It probably needs to be a more role-play situation, what really happens, and show little blurbs of how you can deal with it, the temptation. Don’t go around people for a while. Situations that make you nervous. Different things like that is what I think about.”

“The first [Line] one was kind of stupid; I didn’t understand it.”

Poisons

Brief description: Family holding, sipping, and smelling scientific glasswear and paraphernalia, with voiceover about toxic chemicals being ingested or exposed to your family.

This commercial was not disliked, but did not seem to leave a great positive—or negative—impression on participants. It was not extensively discussed.

When asked who this commercial targeted, one person felt that it targeted:

“The ... the older generation. Because the older generation didn’t know all that. They’re just beginning to know that all this is in the cigarettes. I do believe anybody in their right mind knowing all that’s in the cigarettes ain’t going to start. I know I wouldn’t have.”

It was viewed by one as being:

“... proactive in trying to prevent anyone in beginning to smoke,”

opposed to assisting people to stop smoking, although several people felt it could accomplish that latter goal:

“Because as I said a lot of people didn’t know they had all that in the cigarettes, they just thought you were smoking tobacco. And you just thought it wasn’t a harming thing to do. At the time I started. And this is why I’m saying the government need to step in and have tobacco companies forced to put what is contained in those cigarettes. They need the contents on the package for future generations. Cause even with us telling them they’re not going to believe it, but if they read it, they see it on the packages, and even with those ... commercials you know you don’t believe everything on TV, but you’ll will believe what’s on the paper.”

“It showed how we’re out here smoking. And how it’s killing us. What kind of substance is being put into our system. And looking at that, it makes you think. ‘I oughta quit smoking, with all this going into me.’”

Hooked

Brief description: man fishing pulling in dying fish from pier; woman’s voiceover saying that tobacco industry knows that nicotine is addictive and will continue to addict people.

The message in Hooked was not consistently understood, and participants did not feel this commercial or its approach would be effective in initiating a helpline

call, even if its content was true. No one identified a target audience for this commercial.

The comments were very clear about this commercial, and indicated that the story line was too hard to follow and the visual images did not seem to correspond to the text, voice, and content. It did not engage the viewers:

“It’s kinda hard. The words are saying it. But like I said even if you were just far away looking at it, you wouldn’t just stop and pay attention to it unless you actually heard it.”

“The one with the fishing [Hooked] you have to pay close attention to what they’re trying to tell you. It’s not like you’re going to pick it up quickly.”

This is in contrast to Chain, which some viewers felt was simple to understand even if only glimpsed at (though some disagree, as seen below):

“The first one [Chain] you will. Real quick. You have to think about the second one [Hooked]. Because its like, it looks like he has a lot of fish in this particular pond. But when you do an ad, you want to do an ad so that even if I just came in on it I will know that the ad is talking about. If I were to just come in on that ad in the middle. I would just think that that is a man fishing. You wouldn’t think that it’s dealing with tobacco. Even with the first ad you can see that that is dealing with tobacco.”

So while the message was clear to some, it was not to all. Further, it did not invoke a call to action or desire to stop smoking... smokers viewed it but did not seem to internalize or personalize the message:

“Basically the 2nd ad [Hooked], the only part that they would say “there are more fish in the sea” lets you know that the tobacco industry don’t give a damn. All they want to do is make their money, because they’re putting more nicotine into their cigarettes. But they have more fishes in the sea. So even if I realize that these cigarettes are not tasting good or its time for me to quit. Even though I quit you have another one you can catch behind me. So hopefully, it will get to both generations because even if the older generation is stopping they’re telling the younger generation “we’re going to pick you up”. Hopefully the younger generation will get angry enough to say no you’re not, you’re going to stop at the old generation.”

“The tobacco companies are seeing where they’re losing they’re losing more and more smokers each year. So yeah they’re trying to put more nicotine, they’re trying to show the public that’s what they’re doing.”

“They know it’s the nicotine. The smoking cessation program could keep going like its doing even if its OPH, if you get one person, just one person

to stop smoking eventually you're gonna put tobacco out of business. You're gonna put them out of business, because that one person not smoking may have the younger children, and the younger children see them not smoking so they're not going to smoke. And then it's going to go on and on. And the tobacco company will go out of business. And they're right they are putting more nicotine in the cigarettes."

Pick up the phone (no more butts)

Brief description: Phone with voiceover encouraging call to helpline; number printed on screen.

This commercial was viewed as targeting:

"Anyone."

The most active discussion about this commercial revolved around privacy concerns related to calling a helpline:

"It all depends on what the telephone number is for. What are you supposed to do with that telephone number? Is it to seek help?"

"Like they are going to get a call at 6:00PM in the evening when they are eating their dinner."

"You get on a junk mail list."

"A lot of times with the phone numbers too...a lot of people are paranoid...this could be taped phone call. Strange things could be going through their minds."

"Exactly, they just want to track your phone number through one of those caller ID's and they are afraid they are going to have your phone number to aggravate them during the day."

Others felt it would be hard to recall the number or its purpose:

"You ignore the phone number because you are still trying to get the message off the advertisement and then you move on to whatever advertisement comes next. If they show that advertisement on television you'll find the next one is advertising for furniture, it takes your attention away."

Except for one participant who called a Nicoderm helpline, no participant reported ever having made a call to a help or helpline, despite the fact that a few thought it could be beneficial:

"I've never use the phone hot line. But it will make you aware of the problem."

"Neither have I."

"I agree."

When asked, "we're choosing between ads to promote a helpline number. Which of these four ads [Pick up the phone, Poisons, Chain, Hooked] would make you pick up the phone?"

There were several choruses of, "None."

Miscellaneous comments

On commercials, many felt they have little impact:

"My personal opinion is that I don't think that commercials have any point. I watch it and I think that is about someone else that is not about me... those kinds of commercials never influence me. I hope they influence you or you but they never influence me. That is how I look at it as a consumer or a smoker or whatever. I think if those were effective there wouldn't be so many smokers."

As above, no one called helplines, and when asked about several of the commercials' ability to prompt a call to a helpline were met with a resounding "no."

One important finding is that humor was greeted by some as the correct and by others as the incorrect approach to communicating the need to stop smoking. Outcomes studies are necessary to evaluate the impact of specific communication types on the behaviors of interest. It may be that humor is recalled better because of its uniqueness and, even if not liked, impacts behavior significantly. However, it may also be that the association of gravity from the commercial with a serious issue has a positive association with the outcomes of interest.

"Because you can be humorous about subjects that won't impact negatively on people's lives but to be humorous about a subject that would impact negatively on a person's life doesn't bring the message across. If I was a young 16 year old and you were trying to show me a cartoon I would actually think it is only a cartoon. That it is not that important. But if you were going to give be a message where you give me facts and initiate debate or discussion, that would make me think. It is about internalizing it and beginning to understand what the message is."

"I think if you humorize it you lessen it."

"I think serious, the more serious you are about anything it will be taken more serious. Humor ... you can laugh it off."

"A serious tone, because it's a serious matter. No I don't think it should be a joking matter. Not concerning trying to quit smoking. Matter of fact you don't realize how quitting, when you do quit, how something has controlled for that period of time. It really makes you angry."

But still, others felt:

"I think people are more apt to watch the humorous ones."

One of the most valuable elements of these focus groups was the volume of creative and intelligent suggestions for media campaigns. Here are some of the most interesting and oft-repeated suggestions and insights:

"A lot of blitz commercials. Quick commercials."

"A smoker thinks that would never happen to me. One day they're going to come out 'smoking is good for you.'"

"Commercial of people like us who've quit, and say 'these people have quit'. And they could say it was easier than I thought."

"Comparing, for example, if you were ever able to do twins where one is a smoker and the other is a non-smoker. And you follow them and see the difference...because everyone knows that when you smoke you got to pucker your lips and you get lines. And for pure vanity. There is an ad in Ireland where there is a woman with a powder blusher and she is dipping it into an ashtray and applying it to her face. And that is the color of a smoker and it is a very vain thing but it works. I think it is the type of thing that works."

"Exactly, that has been decayed through smoking. Give them the actuality of...just like they are doing with kids as far as being mischievous they bring them through jailhouse and let them see what it would be like to live there. That is where the programs have to start. They have to start in schools to where they are around it but they are not in the situation of doing it. You gotta teach that mind not to do it. Just like anything else you teach the kids how to add subtract, history, science...you put in their minds stuff they don't know about. Give them something else to think about, smoking and what it can do and how harmful it is and what it can do further on. You are fine now when you are eighteen –nineteen years old and

you smoke and this nicotine is in your system and it generates to your newborn.”

“For the young people it is really important to go after the things like it makes your breath stink, it makes your teeth yellow, all that stuff. Because kids think they are invincible and they think that nothing bad is going to happen to them. That is just the nature of how they think. They just don’t think anything is going to happen to them but if threaten their looks, yes exactly.”

“I believe any ad which would convey someone who is educated to someone who has to quit smoking should be something which has to show that yes, you could do it, no it’s not difficult, it’s just a question of how determined you are, and how psychologically strong you are. If someone wants to quit smoking, they should be told “Yes, it is possible.” There should be an ad which says “Yes, I was smoking, but I decided I may give up and I have done it.” That is what I think would be a good ad.”

“I quit in January about a week and a half ago I walked outside I see a guy that I hadn’t seen in four months, and he said “ I thought you quit or had been fired”. I said no I quit smoking, he walked 30 feet to shake my hand and thank me. Congratulate me.” [Suggests that commercials that emphasize pride and accomplishment might be efficacious.]

“I think if you hear people say it was easier than I thought than that’s effective. Because if you talk to friends or co-workers they make it sound like hell on earth to quit. And that’s why I didn’t for so long. Cause they say “you’re gonna be miserable, you’re not going to be able to do it, the cravings are awful”. And I’m like why go for that I’ll just smoke.”

“I think it has to be a combination. Know your audience and you cannot sell something by using one method. It is a combination.”

“I think you do a couple of ads with the pregnant woman smoking and the baby coughing in the womb. Old before your time. Or you are wrinkled before your time.”

“I think you should have an ad that says 'if you want to see this in 2020, the year two thousand twenty, stop smoking.'”

“I think your campaign should be in the schools. People give it up for personal reasons. I think preventative ads in schools will work more.”

“If you a girl and you are pregnant that is a good reason not to smoke. Because you don’t want to put these chemicals in the body and harm the child. That is the kind of commercial that should be on television. More

about pregnancy. The oxygen in your body is the oxygen your baby is going to breathe. If you smoke for ten years and all of the sudden you have a baby he is inhaling un-pure oxygen.”

“It should be delivered by the health authorities because they have facts of the deaths, people who are now crippled through smoking and smoking related diseases. Circulation is another one where you have amputees through smoking. Show them it.”

“Like I am Tiger Woods and I am a non-smoker.”

“Lots of women go for the pulling heartstrings.”

“Make them [commercials] more realistic.”

“Need to target a real smoker.

“Not everybody is strong enough to be an individual and people follow you and feel like they have to do certain things. They have some on television now as far as kids and peer pressure that they can say no. It is cooler to say no than it is to say yes. I think those might get across to some people.”

“People who are like tens and the one standing there, standing there and the other one smoking and basically disintegrating. And in the end having a voice box. Because I think that is disgusting. And still smoking and the smoke coming out of the voice box. Like you know the way in movies when someone has been shot and they show the path of the bullet through the body. If they did the same things with a cigarette and going through and damaging everything as it is going through. If they could age the person smoking it could show you what you could have had.”

“Quick things, a flash commercial. Could you make that a funny commercial? A kissing commercial. Bring it to the personal level.”

“See there again is the vanity of it as well.”

“Short and concise, to the point.”

“Some kind of person that people look up to saying no, don’t smoke. Britney Spears or Michael Jackson during the old days. Someone like that. Someone that they focus on.”

“Teenagers and women are not focused in any of these ads, so it would be good to focus them.”

“There is no such thing as over the top, you need to get that message.”

“There was a quit campaign I remember and everyone ran about with stickers that said I quit. And I started it in one of the factories that I worked and we all put in money in and the last one there with the I quit sticker on got all the money.”

“They also said Marlboro Red made you sterile. Your sperm count would decrease. So I never did smoke Marlboro Reds.”

“They need to be positive, and tell people how easy it is to really quit.”

“I don’t need to be belittled and told how stupid I am. We know it’s stupid already.”

The most impressive ad I’ve ever seen on TV, and it had nothing to do with smoking, was the one where they cracked the egg in the frying pan. ‘This is your brain on drugs.’ That was the most depressive ad ever. [Maybe try] ‘This is your lungs. These are your lungs after smoking x amount of years’ something like that.”

“What PERSON said makes sense... you think of the crack cocaine commercial, if they had something like that designed for cigarette smoking I think it would do a lot better.”

Summary of findings on smoking cessation

- Humorous commercials generated the most conversation, and appeared to be the most memorable to participants. However, many articulated that there is not a place for humor when dealing with such a serious issue as health effects of smoking.
- Part of the humor of the Gala event commercial emerged from the topic: impotence. This was new information to most of the participants. It appeared that sexual dysfunction was a poignant health risk that would be effective in reducing smoking and facilitating calling the helpline. The humor in the context of the commercial, however, might work for some (younger men) but also might not work for others. In addition, one person did not understand—because of the humor—that the information in the commercial was scientific; it was perceived as funny but not serious. Use of this topic in multiple ways—perhaps “cool” and “slick” as in this commercial combined with one with a more serious tone may, in tandem, be effective.

- Serious, dramatic commercials were seen overall as the best way of communicating the dangers of smoking and the benefits of smoking cessation.
- Short, concise, easy-to-follow commercials were seen as the best method of communicating the issues to viewers.
- Commercials with abstract messages or those that require careful watching and listening are unlikely to successfully recruit calls to the helpline.
- The message contained in Never let it be said—about the financial implications of cigarette smoking and the loss of money which could go elsewhere for individuals and communities—was appealing to all participants. In fact, this commercial was the overall favorite in *context*. However, the focus on African-American communities was offensive to African-American (due to the perception that it is saying that all African-Americans smoke) and white people alike (due to the perception that it is saying the problem does not affect them).
- Commercials which present the effects of smoking on a community—especially with regard to loss of resources which could otherwise be used in the community—were seen as very effective. However, this type of commercial must use a variety of races, and not select just one. The commercial using only an African-American community was appreciated for its content—that smoking takes away from the community—but all races felt that it suggested that only one race smoked. This was offensive to everyone in a variety of ways. Thus, a commercial which focused on socioeconomic class or actual community—and included a mix of races—with the same content would be an excellent approach.
- Participants were not particularly enthusiastic about the use of helplines in general, though many expressed benefit from support groups.
- The very brief commercial [number] displaying a helpline number with the text that “Over two thousand Americans” quit smoking every day was met with concerns about calling. Several participants were concerned that calling the number (due to caller ID and other mechanisms) would result in being harassed, having telemarketers call them, or having violations of privacy.
- Commercials which demonstrate that quitting smoking is a process, and that one may stumble before completing the process, were appreciated by the participants. Many liked Line for this approach, though some felt that the story line was too hard to follow and that it was too negative (e.g., emphasizing the difficulty and not the simplicity of smoking cessation).

- The one commercial featuring a working class male was welcomed by the participants and viewed as being the most “real.”
- The comedic Date commercial was enjoyed, but the message—that one knows when it is time to quit smoking—was frequently misinterpreted due to the complex story line and also the humor.
- Animated, hyperbolic commercials (e.g., Soul) which invoke religion and too much drama were disliked by all.
- Dramatization of the Poisons being ingested when smoking (and also by those around smokers) in Poison were well received. However, it did not leave a great impact on participants and several mentioned that the commercial would not do it, but what was needed was labeling on cigarette packets. (Note that some of these already exist. For example, the warning that “cigarettes contain carbon monoxide.”)
- The story in Anniversary commercial was seen as too hard to follow by many. It was also felt by some to contain too sunny of an image, focusing on the happy moments rather than the reality of the death.
- In Birthday, the image of an older man finding meaning in and deciding to quit so that he can be with his grandson was appreciated almost unanimously. Despite the fact that it was viewed as targeting older people, several felt that it can easily apply to all age groups.
- The concept in Hooked was too complicated and required too much attention to grasp according to some participants. The intent was understood, but did not appear to be readily applied to the individual and his actions regarding smoking cessation.
- Death and loss, as relayed by a daughter who lost her father, were well received as methods of bringing the seriousness of smoking home. Many participants had experienced such a loss, and most appeared to readily extrapolate that loss to the loss their loved ones would feel in the event of their deaths.
- Chain, with its African-American women and multi-generational approach was well received, and the message seemed to resonate with several women. Interestingly, unlike Never which also had only African-Americans, this one did not raise any fears of prejudice. The message to cease smoking for future generations was clearly taken, though several felt that the story line was again too complex and hard to understand in the absence of 100% concentration from beginning to end.

Appendices

- A. Focus group guide
- B. Demographic data collection form
- C. Site locations
- D. Video content analysis tool
- E. Content of videos screened

Appendix A Focus Group Guide

Cessation Focus Group Guide

Revised 5/13/02

[Introductory text, informed consent process, and ground rules here.]

1. All of you are smokers here. I would like to know when you first began smoking on a regular basis and how long you have been smoking.

Probe: How much are you smoking these days/currently?

2. Now think about some of the times that you tried quitting. What were some of the reasons you tried to quit?

Probe: How many times have you tried quitting?

What made it hard or difficult to quit?

What people, organizations, products, or helplines provided support?

We are going to look at the first set of ads for smoking cessation and then we would like to hear what you think about those ads. *Show ads.*

3. What do think about these ads about quitting?

Probe: Who was this ad aimed at/targeting?

What did you like about them? Not like?

What did they make you think about or want to do?

What messages or ideas could you personally relate to?

When there is a number show in the ad, what does it do for you?

We are going to look at the second set of ads and get your feedback on those. *Show ads.*

4. What do think about these ads about quitting?

Probe: REPEAT PROBES FROM Q. 3

5. Based on your personal experience, which of these ads would be more effective in helping you to quit smoking?

Probe: Which would change the way you thought about quitting?

Which of these ads would actually get you to call a number?

What tone did you prefer? Serious? Funny?

6. You have seen X (*fill in with a number*) different ads today and you've given us your opinions about the messages. What other ideas or messages would you want to see for smokers like yourself that were not in these ads?

Probe: How do you like to get those messages? Friends? Medical providers? The media?

Do you remember seeing any other ads relating to smoking that you thought were good? What do you remember about them?

Closing and Thank You.

Appendix B

Demographic Data Collection Form

Focus group date ____/____/_____ Location_____

Please complete this brief form before we start the focus group. These questions will let us know a little bit about you. You do not have to answer any of the questions that you do not want to answer. All information you provide is completely anonymous (your name will not be collected) and will not be disclosed to anyone.

1. Gender

- ☐ 0—female
- ☐ 1—male
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say

2. How would you best define your current marital status?

- ☐ 0—single
- ☐ 1—married
- ☐ 2—divorced/separated
- ☐ 3—widowed
- ☐ 4—unmarried but living with partner, common law marriage
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

3. What race do you consider yourself?

- ☐ 0—white/Caucasian
- ☐ 1—black/African-American
- ☐ 2—Native American/Alaskan Native
- ☐ 3—Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ 5—multiracial
- ☐ 6—other, specify_____
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

4. Are you Hispanic?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

5. Where do you live right now?

- ☐ 1—in a house I own
- ☐ 2—in a house I rent
- ☐ 3—in an apartment I rent
- ☐ 4—in a family member's or friend's house or apartment
- ☐ 5—I'm homeless (including shelter, vehicle, street)
- ☐ 6—I'm living in a residential facility right now (including group home, drug treatment)
- ☐ 7—other, specify _____
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

6. How many people live with you? _____

7. How many children under 18 years old live with you? _____

8. Do you have a job right now?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

9. What is the highest grade you have completed in school?

- ☐ 0—kindergarten through 8th grade
- ☐ 1—some high school
- ☐ 2—I am a High school graduate
- ☐ 3—some college/trade school
- ☐ 4—I am a college/trade school graduate
- ☐ 5—some graduate school
- ☐ 6—I have a graduate degree, please indicate: _____
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

10. Have you ever smoked cigarettes?

- ☐ 0—no (If no, skip to Question 15)
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

If you have ever smoked cigarettes:

11. How many years have you or did you smoke?__ __

- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

12. Do you still smoke?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

13. How many cigarettes did you smoke yesterday?__ __ __

- ☐ 0—I don't smoke
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

14. Have you ever tried to quit smoking?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes →→→→→→→ If yes, how many times? __ __ __
 - ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
 - ☐ 99—I don't know
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

15. Do you live with a smoker?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

16. If you are a woman, are you pregnant?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

17. Do you work in the health care field?

- ☐ 0—no
- ☐ 1—yes
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

18. If you are a health care professional, what is your job title?

- ☐ 0—laboratory technician
- ☐ 1—dentist
- ☐ 2—dental assistant/hygienist
- ☐ 3—volunteer in hospital/clinic
- ☐ 4—health educator
- ☐ 5—nurse's aide
- ☐ 6—physician's aide
- ☐ 7—nurse, please indicate your degree _____
- ☐ 8—maintenance/janitorial
- ☐ 9—administrative
- ☐ 10—doctor
- ☐ 11—other, please specify _____
- ☐ 88—I prefer not to say
- ☐ 99—I don't know

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions!
Please return this form to the focus group leader before leaving.

Appendix C

Site Locations

Glenwood Regional Medical Center, West Monroe
Leonard J. Charbert Medical Center, Houma
Louisiana State Office of Public Health, New Orleans
LSU Center, Baton Rouge
Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center, Lafayette
Slidell Memorial Hospital, Slidell

Appendix D

Video Analysis Content Tool

Video Content Analysis Tool

Tape Name: _____

Title: _____

Time: _____

Age of actors in video: _____

Race of actors in video: _____

Gender of actors in video:

Quit # included? _____

Reasons given to quit: _____

Tone (humor, serious, etc): _____

Subjective assessment (like/dislike): _____

Other comments: _____

Appendix E

Video Content Analysis

Commercial pairings

Gala—Song

Line—Anniversary

Gala—Anniversary

Line—Song

Soul—Birthday

Date—Never let it be said

Soul—Never let it be said

Birthday—Date

Pick up the phone—Poisons

Chain—Hooked

Humorous commercials

Date

[Sequence of action: beautiful blonde, Caucasian woman. On date in upscale restaurant. Asks to be excused for a moment. En route to bathroom (which has no smoking sign on door) she opens purse, gets cigarettes out. Goes into stall. Starts smoking. Looks up: notices smoke detector. Woman stands on toilet seat and begins fanning detector. Foot falls into toilet. Smoke detector goes off. Promptly falls into toilet. Sprinkler system begins spraying water. Woman has extremely alarmed look, as she grabs her leg and tries to remove from the toilet.]

Voiceover:

“There’s a moment in every smoker’s life when it becomes clear it’s finally time to quit. If it hasn’t happened for you yet, it will.”

Gala event (impotence)

[Sequence of action: musing playing, fancy ball, men in tuxedos, women in elegant attire, good looking Caucasian man and woman eye each other as she approaches him from across the room. He lights a cigarette. She smiles at him while he inhales, exhaling the through his nose. She looks at him. He turns to profile and the cigarette droops conspicuously with text, “impotence.” He looks straight at her and the cigarette remains droopy; she returns glance with a subtle

shake of her head and pursed lips, and retreats. Three men (two Caucasian and one African-American) are Lined up and all smoking while eyeing another beautiful woman, all with drooping cigarettes as she passes by.]

Voiceover:

“Now that medical researchers believe that cigarettes are a leading cause of impotence, you are going to be looking at smoking a little differently.”

Voiceover with text:

“Cigarettes: still think they’re sexy?”

PERSON 4: the humor of the first one, it took the glamour out of smoking. I like the first one. Because that’s why we all start smoking, it was cool. When I started smoking I was 14 or 15 yrs old. I was cool. Everybody smoked and it was cool.

I think maybe show the first one to men, because they don’t realize it. I know an awful lot of men who have quit now because they’ve got high blood pressure and other health reasons for quitting.

I think the 1st one hits a message that you don’t hear a lot about, impotence. So that’s another message as to why you shouldn’t smoke.

MODERATOR: so it’s a new piece of information. If we put a phone number to call for help to quit smoking, which would one of these two ads would speak to you more?

I loved the first one.

Informational humor

Line (Chuck)

[Sequence of action: Caucasian working collar man—Chuck—in all white background talking directly to camera. At blips, points onto “lens” and black dot comes on it for blips, after which they turn into a big Line which stretches out with text, “it’s blipping amazing.”]

“I quit smoking here, and it was supposed to last for the rest of my life. It turned out that I needed a cigarette: blip... and blip... and blip... etc. Yeah, I blew it. But I quit again, this time for a day—no blip. And then for

another. And then for another. And now I'm getting it: it's blipping amazing."

Poisons

[Sequence of action: Caucasian family (mother, father, young girl, baby) together, each sipping chemicals from beakers, test tubes, etc.. All are brightly colored and smoking. At end with text, "before you smoke..." father starts to smoke cigarette but, surrounded by family, puts it down.]

Voiceover:

"Would you drink formaldehyde? It's an embalming fluid. Or cyanide? You know that's a poison. Or nicotine? It's as addictive as heroin, and it is used as a pesticide. These are the real ingredients of cigarettes: Poisons that attack the smoker and those who breathe the smoke. Before you smoke, think about your family and protect them."

Hooked

[Sequence of action: back of man, fishing on pier, casting one and catching one fish after another. Shots underwater with fish on hooks, writhing. Then being pulled up and piled up and gasping for breath. Voiceover is by Sally Kellerman.]

Voiceover:

"It's one of the most addictive substances on earth. And it's Hooked millions. It's called nicotine and the tobacco industry knows the more nicotine their cigarettes have, the more Hooked you'll be. Of course every year thousands of people die from their addiction. But you know what they say: there's plenty of fish in the sea."

Voiceover with text:

"The tobacco industry: they profit, you lose."

Informational

Pick up the phone

[Sequence of action: putting out cigarettes into ashtray. Hand reaching for phone and dialing number. Voiceover is by Sally Kellerman.]

Voiceover:

"Over two thousand Americans put these down every day for good. If you want to be one of them, call this number: 1-800-7-NO-BUTTS."

Effects on individual and society

Soul (also called "Heart")

[Sequence of animation: Swirly and red, abstract animated hands, picture of person inhaling smoke. Smoke traveling down into lungs. Beating heart. Heart being strangled by rope. Abstract people dying. Animated picture of family standing together.]

Voiceover:

“People think that smoking is not dangerous. However, when you smoke, your lungs absorb thousands of chemical substances. Your body is robbed of oxygen. Your blood pressure rises. But where it hurts the most is in the Soul: because every day 1100 people die of diseases caused by smoking. Don’t be a victim of cigarettes.”

Never let it be said

[Sequence of action: neighborhood scenes of urban streets, populated with African-American men and women. Moves from street scene with white man moving cigarette vending machine into an African-American’s store, to individuals in windows in apartments smoking, a woman smoking, a homeless man lying on the street with a sign, a man with hands over his face; one picture of white older man with text, “they get richer”, to joyous graduate in regalia and dancer’s feet with text “dreams, achievement, and love.”]

Voiceover:

“Who says no one wants to do business in the black community? The tobacco industry spends millions on advertising aimed at us. We spend over 6 billion dollars a year buying cigarettes, enough to educate and employ thousands of people. Instead, our billions contribute to more than 45,000 smoking related deaths a year. They get richer, we loose a lifetime of dreams, achievement, and love Don’t let them rob us of our most precious resources: ourselves.”

Effects on individuals/families/death and dying

Birthday

[Sequence of action: Older Caucasian man leaning against wall, sipping tea, talking. In light room, baby's Birthday being celebrated. Walks over to table where woman placing Birthday cake on table. Man leans over to kiss baby, who is wearing a Birthday hat.]

Man says:

"I smoked for about 30 years. I knew what it was doing to me... my doctor gave me a million and one reasons to quit, all perfectly sensible. But do you know why I finally did it? It all had to do with an upcoming Birthday: yours."

Voiceover with text:

"It's never too late to quit."

Anniversary (Georgia)

[Sequence of action, all in black and white: older Caucasian woman (Georgia London) seated and talking with small child on her lap, looking at pictures—shown to camera—of elderly man, evidently ill, with oxygen and in hospital, holding baby, at party, etc.. Intermixed with pictures of older woman with multiple generations in house, yard, with family, and with older woman.]

Georgia character talking:

"Grandpa kept saying that he was so glad that he lived to see our 50th anniversary, but it wasn't really our 50th, it was our 49th, but we didn't have the heart to tell him. So the kids they went out and bought a 50th anniversary cake and brought him little gifts and we had a party back in the bedroom. And he said that he had the best day that he'd ever had. But he said, you know, sometimes you have the best day before you go home."

Text:

"Tom London died from smoking."

"Tobacco... it's killing the ones you loved."

Song (little brown eyes) (also called "Song CA")

[Sequence of action: young African-American woman sitting in chair in close up on right talking to camera. Begins to cry in middle of text. Printed text comes on in middle of narrative. Fades to white at end.]

“Little brown eyes. He’d call me his little brown eyed, bright eyed baby. He even made up a Song about it: you’re my little brown eyed, bright eyed baby, you’re my little brown eyed, bright eyed girl, you’re my little brown eyed baby, and your daddy loves you so.”

Text:

“Julie’s dad died from lung cancer caused by smoking.”

“African-American men’s lung cancer rate is 50% higher than white men.”

Chain (generations)

[Sequence of action: multilayered, with music. In front, African-American woman talking while smoking. With each changing person (indicated below), image switches to a younger woman. In back, a small African-American girl plays dress up and is herself smoking. At end, close up on her smoking.]

First woman:

“I’ve been smoking all my life. It’s terrible but smoking calms my nerves. I don’t think it affected my daughter. She smokes but...”

Second woman:

“My mother smokes her butt off, and so do I. But that’s not why my daughter smokes: I always told her to do as I say not as I do...”

Third woman:

“But I started smoking anyway: I didn’t want to gain weight, but I always tell my daughter: don’t smoke.”

Text:

“Warning: when you smoke your family smokes.”


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Never Let It Be Said

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Series None
Campaign None
Media Type Television

Theme Tobacco Industry
Target Audience Adults, African Americans
Language English

Description This video portrays an African American store-owner accepting a shipment of cigarettes. This is followed by images of African Americans smoking and feeling miserable about it. The narrator urges the black community to resist targeted advertising.

Optimal Placement No information

Strategy To educate consumers about the deceptive strategies used by the tobacco industry in the United States and/or around the world.

Key Message The tobacco industry targets African Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities.

Execution Style Live (interview etc.), Actor

Ethnicity of Characters African American

Testing/ Research No information

Reactions No information

Wave Wave 3 (1999 Video)

Produced By No information

Produced For	California Department of Health Services
Talent Agency	No information
Music By	No information
Usage Limitation	No information

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